

**Douglas County, Colorado
 HISTORIC LANDMARK
 COVERLET
 1997**



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Douglas County Historic Preservation Board

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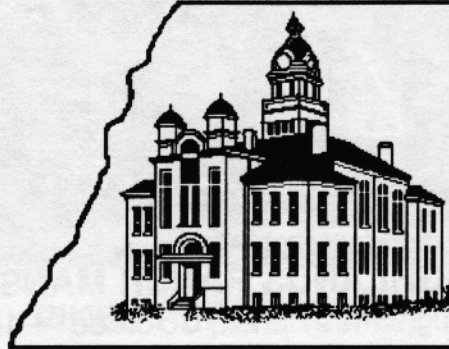
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Introduction

Douglas County has a rich and colorful history. The area was inhabited first by Paleo-Indians, and later primarily by Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Indians. Trappers and traders, such as Jim Bridger and Kit Carson, are known to have hunted and trailed in this region. Two major trails, the Cherokee and the Smoky Hill, traversed the area. When Colorado became a territory in 1861, the area was subdivided into counties. Douglas County was one of the seventeen counties designated and was named after the famous Stephen A. Douglas of Lincoln-Douglas fame. Originally, the county extended from the Platte River east to the Kansas border. Frankstown was the first county seat and remained as such until 1874, when an election was held and Castle Rock became the county government center. Elbert County was carved out of the eastern portion of Douglas County that same year. The 843 square miles that remain as Douglas County today have a northern boundary that extends 20 miles and a southern boundary that extends 30 miles that are perpendicular to its 30-mile north-south border on the eastern side.

The initial discovery of gold at Russellville on June 22, 1858, by the Green Russell Party helped to trigger the 1859 Pikes Peak Gold Rush that saw some 150,000 gold seekers travel to Colorado and attempt to find their personal bonanzas. This fact inspired author Frank Hall in 1889 to refer to Douglas County as "the Birthplace of Colorado." Although gold was found here, no large quantities were produced. Instead, Douglas County became renowned for its lumber mills, rhyolite rock deposits, dairy farms, and large cattle ranches.

Cherished memories of the past are represented by the structures on the Douglas County, Colorado, Historic Landmark Coverlet.



DOUGLAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Castle Rock, Colorado — 1890

When the Town of Castle Rock was platted in 1874, a block in the center of town was laid out as the site of the future courthouse. On November 14, 1889, the residents of Douglas County voted to build a permanent building on "Courthouse Square." The estimated cost was \$20,000. The County hired W. R. Parsons & Sons of Topeka, Kansas, as architects, and J. M. Anderson of Emporia, Kansas, as building contractor. The building was completed in September of 1890, for a final cost of \$33,000 including furnishings. Constructed of rhyolite, a native stone, the building measured 60 by 100 feet and included two stories and a walk-out basement. The structure was topped with a stamped-tin tower at its apex, flanked by "broken" facades and four stone towers. The majestic stone building was the pride of the county for over 88 years.

Tragically, the courthouse building was destroyed by fire in 1978. To quote from *Castle Rock, A Grass Roots History*, "On March 11, 1978, the fire bell tolled the end of the Douglas County Courthouse. In a rage of flames that engulfed the fine old stones, [fire] gutted the inside and sent the stamped tin tower crashing..." The history of 88 years and a building of great beauty were lost overnight.



HIGHLANDS RANCH MANSION

Highlands Ranch, Colorado — 1891

In the 1870s, John W. Springer purchased about 160 acres of property 14 miles south of Denver from Mary Buckard, an original homesteader. In 1891, he started the main building of his "Cross Country Ranch" in Elizabethan Revival architectural style. In 1913, Springer sold the mansion to his father-in-law, Col. William E. Hughes who sold the property in 1920 to Waite Phillips, a wealthy oilman and philanthropist. Frank Kistler purchased the ranch in 1926 and added the remaining 40 percent of the mansion in classic Tudor style. In 1937, Lawrence C. Phipps Jr. became the owner, renaming it Highland Ranch. Phipps Jr. died in the mansion in 1976, and the family sold the ranch a year later to the Highland Venturers Corporation. In 1980, Mission Viejo, a subsidiary of the Philip Morris tobacco company, purchased the property.

The mansion rests on a concrete and stone foundation; the exterior walls are of moss rock, native stone from south of the property, and stucco. The gable-and-hip style roof is wood shingled, the double windows are wood framed, the interior walls are hardwood or lath-and-plaster, and the flooring is hardwood, softwood, terrazzo, and marble over a wood subfloor supported by wood joists. Today, the 22,000-square-foot mansion boasts 14 bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, five remaining fireplaces, balconies, porches, terraces, and walkways. The property also has tennis courts, a bowling alley, and stables, but the once beautiful swimming pool is no more.



PIKES PEAK GRANGE
Franktown, Colorado — 1909

The Pikes Peak Grange is associated with the Grange movement, an organization established in 1867 that advocated for the economic rights of the farmer. By 1874, this movement had reached Denver. Franktown area Grange members participated actively in the fight against powerful railroad corporations that charged farmers high freight rates to transport their goods. For many years these members met at the Fonder Schoolhouse. In 1909, after they completed construction of a Grange hall, the Pikes Peak Grange No. 163 continued their farmers' rights effort from their present official quarters. This large Grange hall also served the community as an entertainment hub; special events included dances, musical contests, picnics, and scheduled speakers. In 1916, a 520-square-foot addition provided a dining and enlarged kitchen space.

The Pikes Peak Grange is thought to be Colorado's last existing example of the front gabled, vernacular wood-frame Grange building types that were constructed throughout the state starting in the 1860s. The white, clapboard, single-story, rectangular Grange hall rests on a rhyolite and concrete foundation and features on its east side two nine-foot transomed doors that open into a large meeting hall. Twelve double-hung sash windows are on the west, north, and south facing elevations. The Pikes Peak Grange was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 1, 1990.



LOUVIERS CLUB HOUSE

Louviers, Colorado — 1917

The Louviers Club House (Louviers Village Club) was built in 1917 and harkens back to the days when Louviers was a company town. DuPont officials had the club house constructed for its male employees. Membership was mandatory and fifty cents a month was automatically deducted from each employee's paycheck. Upon invitation to the club, women were expected to limit their activities to the upstairs "women's talk room" except during monthly club dances. The building also housed a grocery and mercantile store and a post office. During the 1918 worldwide flu epidemic, the club house was temporarily converted to a hospital to accommodate the stricken community.

In 1975, the DuPont Company donated the Louviers Village Club to Douglas County for the recreational use of county residents. Today the building houses a Douglas County branch library, a gymnasium with a stage and high vaulted ceiling, a large kitchen, and a reception room. But perhaps the building's greatest attraction continues to be its bowling alley, reportedly the oldest surviving active alley in Colorado, with hardwood maple lanes and hand-loaded pin setters.

Constructed of red brick, the historic club house is L-shaped with a gabled roof line spanning two stories. It also features several gabled dormers and a grand block-end chimney. On September 22, 1995, the Louviers Village Club House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.



CRAIG-VICTOR HOUSE

Sedalia, Colorado — 1873

The two-story, square Craig-Victor House was built around 1873 by Judge John H. Craig, an early settler of Plum Station, Colorado. Described as “the finest brick house in the community,” the structure also served as a meeting place for the townspeople. The first floor of the house was the residence, but the upstairs accommodated the community for weddings, funerals, Grange meetings, and dances. Craig became increasingly interested in the development of the town of Castle Rock and in 1876 sold the structure to Marquis Victor. Victor, the most notable and longest dweller of the house, had a successful blacksmith business, was a livery owner, school district director, ran a 700-acre ranch, and was active in the affairs of the community.

“Victor Hall,” as it was known locally, was fashioned in American Gothic style of brick set in a common bond pattern. The front verandah extends the width of the house with four square wooden pillars supporting its flat roof which acts as a floor for the upper westward-facing railed deck. A brick chimney straddles the rear peak of the roof, while stone lintels and sills frame the double-hung sash windows found on all sides of the house. Very little has changed over the years, with the exception of the removal of the outside staircase leading to the upper floor, a coating of white paint, and the town’s name change to Sedalia after the Missouri home town of its first postmaster, Henry Clay.



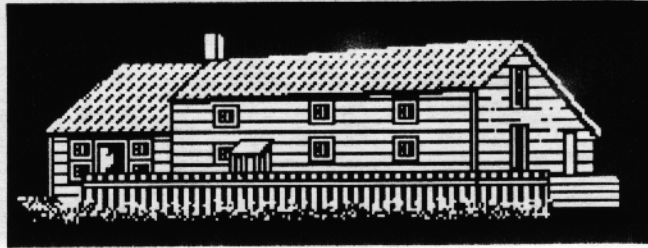
DECKERS LODGE

Deckers, Colorado — 1897

During the West Creek mining boom of the mid-1890s, Stephen D. Decker, a former railroad man, came to the upper South Platte River country hoping to discover his fortune. Struck with the “highly contagious gold fever” epidemic that was sweeping the area at the time, Decker filed a claim at the junction of Horse Creek and the South Platte River. Although he did not strike gold, Decker did discover a natural, free-flowing spring of lithia water which he eventually bottled and marketed as possessing miraculous healing powers. The product was highly successful and allegedly established a steady demand from both the United States and Europe.

Decker promptly opened a saloon and general store that doubled as a post office, and called his tiny settlement Daffodil. In 1897, as the demand for his lithia water became more widespread, Decker established a health resort on his land. Eventually the resort, which was dubbed by promotional literature as “The Tourist’s Paradise,” encompassed twenty-seven buildings, including a music hall for dancing and concerts.

In the 1920s, the resort’s name was legally changed from Daffodil to Deckers in honor of its founder who died in 1917. The lodge and surrounding land were purchased in December, 1981, by the Denver Water Board, who leases it to small-business owners.



20-MILE HOUSE

Parker, Colorado — 1864

The Pine Grove, Colorado, stage stop, located twenty miles from Denver near the junction of the Cherokee and Smoky Hill South trails, welcomed Denver-bound wagon and stagecoach travelers. From 1864 to 1885, the Butterfield Overland Despatch and Santa Fe Stage lines stopped here. 20-Mile House, the largest station in the area, offered hotel and restaurant services along with a blacksmith shop, wagon repair facility, ox-shoeing hoist, post office, and upstairs dance hall. 20-Mile House began in 1864 when George Long moved a year-old one-room cabin to the trail crossroads for use as a way-station adding a large two-story extension along with numerous outbuildings. In 1869, for a handsome span of mules, Long traded the complex to Nelson Doud who homesteaded the site and a year later sold to James Sample Parker, a way-station operator from nearby Kiowa. In December of 1870, the original section became the official Pine Grove post office and Parker its first postmaster. The stage stop prospered under Parker's management and became the center of activity for the growing community. In 1882, the town name was changed to Parker in honor of James. The introduction of railroad service in 1882 drastically reduced stage traffic; in 1885, Parker converted the site to a dairy farm and eventually sold out in 1910, the year of his death. Today, after various owners and structure changes, the heart of the 20-Mile site is being donated to the Town of Parker and efforts are underway to renovate the post office portion and convert the land to a park.



CHARLFORD-CHEROKEE CASTLE

Sedalia, Colorado — 1926

Designed and built in 1926 by prominent Denver architect Burnham Hoyt for Charles Alfred Johnson, this emulation of a 15th century Scottish castle is situated on a rocky promontory of a mesa to capture the spectacular view of the Rocky Mountains. The castle exterior is constructed of various sizes of rock-faced stone blocks on a rubble stone foundation and features four towers, turrets, battlements, tall chimneys, gargoyles, copper downspouts, and Vermont slate gabled roofs. The majority of the windows are multipaned with wood framing, mullions, and muntins. The entrance is an arched front doorway beneath an Elizabethan bay window in a two-story stone-faced front gable section that is half timbered on the sides. To the right is a courtyard; to the left a small stone guard tower with a conical roof. The interior walls of the 24-room castle are dressed rhyolite blocks in muted colors with hand-tooled faces. The castle's spacious timber-vaulted Great Hall contains two large stone fireplaces and a minstrel balcony. The Johnsons named the castle Charlford for their sons, Charles and Gifford.

In 1954, Tweet Kimball purchased the 6,000-acre property and established a Santa Gertrudis cattle operation. The Cherokee Ranch, as she named it, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 21, 1994. In 1996, Mrs. Kimball deeded 4,000 acres, including the castle, to the Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation to preserve this historic property as a wildlife preserve and an art, cultural, and educational center.



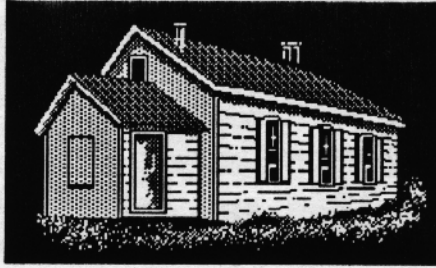
GREENLAND BARN

Greenland/Larkspur, Colorado — 1922

Virtually unchanged for over 100 years, the Greenland Ranch still exists today, a well-known landmark 20 miles south of Castle Rock, Colorado. Originally known as the Greenland Stock Farm, the ranch was homesteaded between the years 1870 and 1875 and eventually included over 15,000 acres. The ranch sported show thoroughbred horses and over 1,000 of the finest cattle in the territory. The oldest cattle brand in the state belonged to I. J. Noe and C. B. Kountz who were involved with the ranch.

The first barn, a large red draft horse barn built in 1877, was struck by lightning in the early 1920s and burned to the ground. Rebuilt in 1922 identical to the original, the barn measures 36 by 101 feet and has 18 horse stalls and a hay loft that holds 111 tons. At 7,000 feet elevation and with abundant moisture, the stretches of luxuriant native grass are unparalleled anywhere along Colorado's Front Range. The ranch was purchased in 1909 by John William Higby and became known as the Greenland Land and Cattle Company. In 1977, the ranch was sold to a Colorado Springs investment company in the largest real estate transaction ever listed as a single parcel.

The ranch is still in operation today and is the longest continually operating cattle ranch in Colorado. Efforts are underway to obtain a portion of the ranch for open space. Residents of Douglas County are hoping that this historic landmark will be saved to be viewed by future generations.



SPRING VALLEY SCHOOL
Spring Valley, Colorado — 1874

Spring Valley School, near Cherry Valley, Colorado, was built in 1874 by Spring Valley pioneers Harrison Bucks, Jacob Geiger, and Henry Gandy. The school stands today virtually as it was over 100 years ago. Dr. Robert and Mildred Beadles purchased the dilapidated structure in 1974 and completely restored the school building, barn, wood shed, and privy over a period of several years. The school was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 in "recognition of this property's significant contribution to the heritage of the State of Colorado."

The small, single-story, vernacular structure is mainly rectangular in shape, but includes a small anteroom entrance on its south side. The framed clapboard exterior rests on a stone foundation that is now overlaid with cement. Shingles cover the gable roof and a single red brick chimney straddles the north end.

The school was used as a meeting place for various organizations and community events, including local Grange meetings, Good Templars, and the Grand Army of the Republic. School desks were moved back for such activities as square dances, spelling bees, school play rehearsals, socials, weddings, funerals, dances, voting, and court trials. The school was closed in 1946 when the population of the area decreased. The historic building represents the last remaining structure of the old Spring Valley settlement that once included a general store, fort, stage stop, creamery, cheese factory, and sawmill.



CANTRIL SCHOOL

Castle Rock, Colorado — 1897

Known as “the stone school on schoolhouse hill,” Cantril School, named after William W. Cantril, was home to the Castle Rock Grade School and the Douglas County High School (replacing the old wooden Castle Rock High School destroyed by fire in 1896). Cantril School, built of gray and pink Castle Rock lava stone in a style similar to that of the Douglas County Courthouse, was dedicated on September 4, 1897. The entrance is a Roman arch set in the west side of the bell tower which intersects the western and southern wings of the building. The hipped roof is supported by ornate scroll designed cornice brackets.

The school opened with grades one through twelve, a faculty of four teachers, and 116 students. It was a well equipped school offering two courses of study: college preparatory and business. Annual tuition was two dollars per student.

In 1906, because of growing enrollment, it was decided to build a bigger building (the Wilcox building) and the Cantril building became Castle Rock Public School. In 1931, a wing on the north was added which included an auditorium, kitchen, meeting room, and stage. An addition on the east side in 1958 provided more classrooms. The building served as a public school until 1984. Since then, it has served as public auditorium and an inoculation center. The Cantril School building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 20, 1984.



History of the DCHPB

The Douglas County Historic Preservation Board (DCHPB) became a volunteer arm of Douglas County government on May 27, 1992. Our mission is to identify, preserve, and communicate the history of Douglas County, Colorado. We strive to attain this goal by the review and maintenance of a county historic resources inventory; by the identification of threats to the historic resources; by acting in a referral capacity to the DC Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners regarding proposed development of property identified to contain historic resources; by participating in the education of county residents on historic matters; and by disseminating information between and among local historical societies.

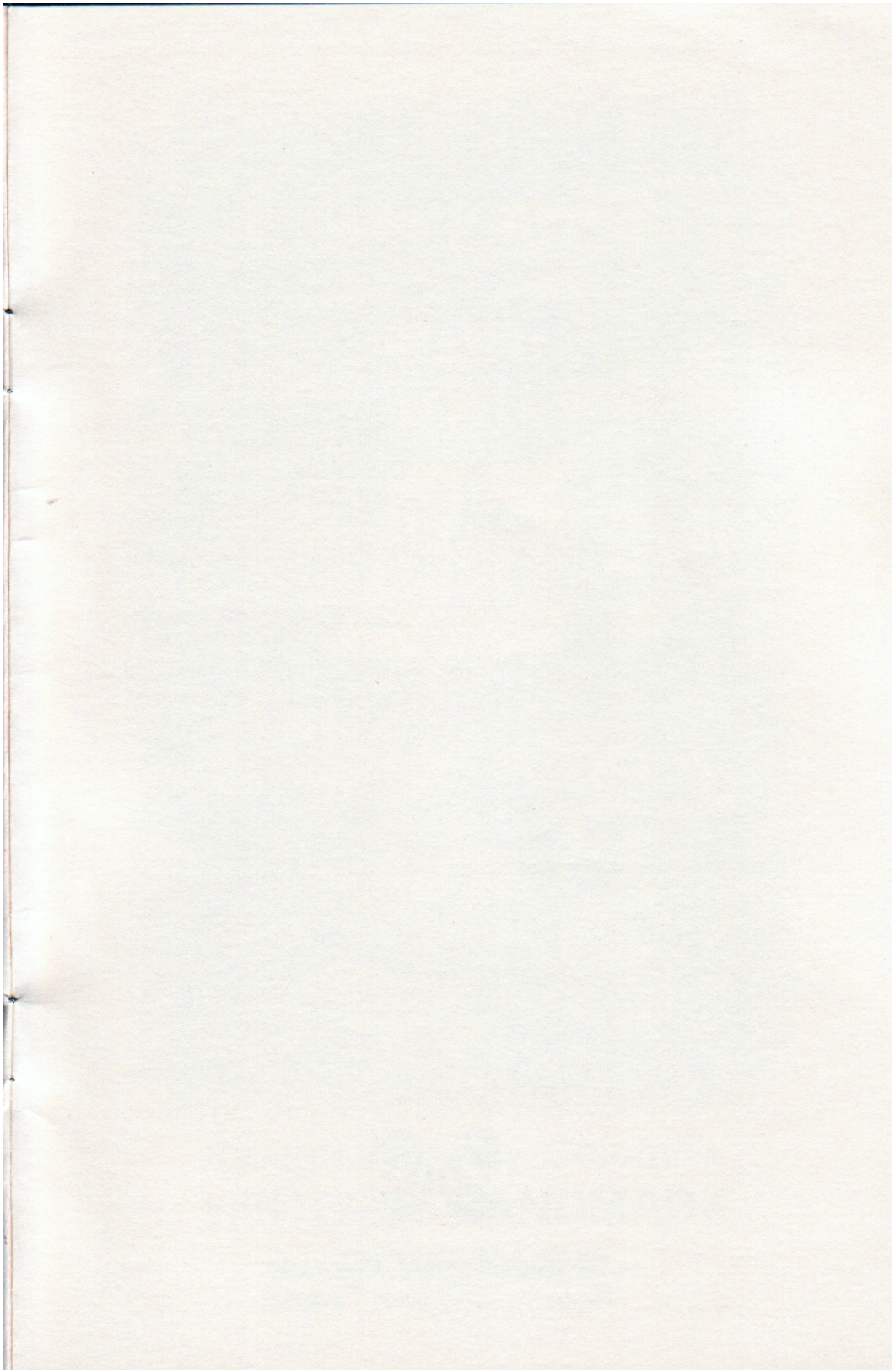
The DCHPB is composed of eighteen Board members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. These members are from all the sectors of the county with one regular and one alternate member representing each of the following areas: Castle Rock, Cherry Valley, Deckers, Franktown, Highlands Ranch, Larkspur, Louviers, Parker, and Sedalia. Additionally, the Board has six non-voting advisors. Officers include chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, and assistant secretary-treasurer.

The Board has operated under the leadership of Clyde Jones, chair, and Kent Brandebery, vice chair, since its inception.

The Coverlet

The Douglas County Historic Landmark Coverlet was created at the suggestion of DC Commissioner James Sullivan. After researching the matter, the DCHPB decided to adopt the Coverlet as an official Board project.

Board member Starr Oberlin, with the assistance of Mary Cornish, planned the Coverlet to include historic structures from throughout the county. Among the contributors to the text were Susie Appleby, Kent Brandebery, Penny Burdick, Clyde Jones, Joni Jones, and Dick Oakes. This booklet was prepared by Dick Oakes and printed by Penny Burdick.





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